THE FIVE SACRED TREES
Concerto for Bassoon and Orchestra

As we become increasingly aware of the damage done by the destruction of our forests, it is illuminating to discover that our ancestors, many thousands of years ago, prayed to the spirits before felling a tree. One prayer was appropriate for a maple, another for the elm, the ash and so on.

The English poet, Robert Graves, writes of these prayers, which I have been unable to find but which, nonetheless, have moved me to compose this music about trees featuring the bassoon, itself a tree.

This is all the result of a request for a concerto by the great bassoonist Judith Le Clair, whose unparalleled artistry is a mystery and a wonder in itself.

I

Eó Mugna, the great oak, whose roots extend to Connla's Well in the "otherworld," stands guard over what is the source of the River Shannon and the font of all wisdom. The well is probably the source of all music, too. The inspiration for this movement is the Irish Uilleann pipe, a distant ancestor of the bassoon, whose music evokes the spirit of Mugna and the sacred well.

II

Tortan is a tree that has been associated with witches and as a result, the fiddle appears, sawing away, as it is conjoined with the music of the bassoon. The Irish Bodhrán drum assists.

III

The ***Tree of Ross*** (or ***Eó Rossa)*** is a yew, and although the yew is often referred to as a symbol of death and destruction, the Tree of Ross is the subject of much rhapsodizing in the literature. It is referred to as "a mother's good," "Diadem of angels" and "faggot of the sages". Hence, the lyrical character of this movement, wherein the bassoon incants and is accompanied by the harp!

IV

Craeb Uisnig is an ash and has been described by Robert Graves as a source of strife. Thus, a ghostly battle, where all that is heard as the phantoms struggle, is the snapping of twigs on the forest floor.

V

Dathi, which purportedly exercised authority over the Poets, and was the last tree to fall, is the subject for the close of the piece. The bassoon soliloquizes as it ponders the secrets of the Trees.

John Williams

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(for Judith Le Clair)

JOHN WILLIAMS

I. Eó Mugna

Note: The clefs used in the Bassoon solo part appear differently from the solo line in the piano reduction.

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In "6" ♪ = 72-76
12
p
(vln.)
pp
(b. clar.)
3
15
3
18
poco
20
5
sfz
(stg.)
(celli)
mp

22
3
24
7
f
pp
(cl.)
26
(celli)
5
5
(cl.)
28
sfz
6
sfz
(flt.)
Solo
f

31
mf
8va
33
p
Solo
mf
8va
(ob.)
loco
mf
35
37
Solo
f

39
sfz
Ped.
42
sfz
(brass)
Ped.
(trom.)
45
8va
loco
sfz
Ped.
sfz
48
Ped.
Ped.
sfz
(stg.)
Ped.
marc.

51
Solo
ff
marc.
cresc. molto
fff
mf
54
Quasi Cadenza
dim.
Colla Parte
57
sfz sub.
mp
59
rapide
mf
Un poco meno
(cello) mp

62
(flt.)
p
64
sfz
6
sfz
5
66
sfz
69
dim.
a niente
Ped.
niente
ppp

II. Tortan

Energico (♩ = 76-80)
Bassoon
Piano
(solo vln.)
mf
sfz
5
sfz
sfz
9
Solo
p
sub. p
13
sfz
p
cresc.
sfz
p
8vb

16
f
sub.p
ff
f
sub. p
ff
8vb
19
f
p
f
pizz.
sfz
23
sfz
sfz
27
mf

31
(stg. sord.)
p
sfz
34
p
sfz
mf
p sub.
38
opt. 8va
42
f

45
f
cresc.
48
Solo
mp
f
52
Cantabile
mf
mp
sim.
pp
8va
55
loco
(8va)

58
61
64
(solo vln.)
67
f
mf

71
74
8va
77
80
(flt. vibe.)
f Solo

84
sfz
87
90
8va
heavily
94
loco
sfz
sfz

97
white key gliss
fff
Ped.
100
Solo
mf
sfz
sfz
sfz
(solo vln.)
sub. mp
103
p
sfz
sfz
sfz
8va
106
p
cresc.
sfz
sub. ff
loco
8va
8va

110
mp
113
sfz
cresc.
sfz
mf
117
ff
f
8va
120
cresc.
ff
(8va)
loco

123
ff
p
ff
p
126
ff
mf
ff
Ped.
129
Solo
f
8va
15ma
loco
pizz.
sub. mp
fff
f marc.
white key gliss
cresc. possibile
8vb
132
Solo
sub. p
p
loco
sub. fff
15ma
ff sub.
martell.
8vb

III. Eó Rossa

Slowly ♩ = 60-66
Bassoon
Piano
rubato
Quasi Harp
mf
Ped.
Ped.
sfz
dim.
R.H.
Reflectively ♩ = 58
4
Solo
pp
mf
p
Ped.
loco
Ped.
loco
8vb
8vb
9
pp
loco
13
Mosso
3
3

17
21
sotto voce rit.
rit.
Solo
mf
26
pp
30
6
f

33
Solo
mf
mp
37
Ped.
41
rubato
accel.
accel.
3
sfz
Ped.
44
rall.
lunga
decresc. poss.
rall.
lunga
p

IV. Craeb Uisnig

15
Ped.
p
8va
17
8va
loco
pp
20
mp
f
8va
p
pp
loco
24
f
sfz
L.H.
p
Lowest White Cluster

28
cresc.
ff
sfz
31
sffz
sfz
4:3
35
mf
4:3
38
sfz
fp
4:3
4:3

42
sfz
4:3
45
7
Ped.
8:6
Ped.
50
cresc. poss.
8va
8va
8va
ff
Solo
stacc.
p
53
pp
msfz
8vb

57
loco
8vb
60
Solo a little more deliberate
mp
sfz
pp
63
sfz
sfz
66
sfz
sfz

70
sfz
sub. mp
cresc.
mp
Ped.
L.H.
ped. down
74
8va
p
77
sfz
4:3
mf
p
82
8va
loco
pp
cresc.
with great force
tr
ff

86
tr
sffz
sffz
4:3
pp
4:3
f
8va
ff
f
Ped.
(Timp.)
92
with force
Ped.
R.H.
ff
L.H.
sffz
5:3
3
97
Solo
3
f
3
p
mp
102
ff
marc.
4:3
8va
ff
mf

108
f
Highest White Cluster
sfffz
loco
8mb
113
sfffz
8va
sfffz
loco
119
marc.
3
3
sub. mp
4:3
8va
1
5
ff
mf
sfffz
Lowest Cluster
125
sub. mp
dim.
p
pp
niente
attacca

V. Dathi

Slowly and Reflectively
Bassoon
Piano
sempre legato
pp
cresc.
sfz
Ped.
pp
f
rall. e dim.
rall. e dim.

17

Calmo

ppp

p

23

cresc.

mf

29

molto rall. e dim.

molto rall. e dim.

35

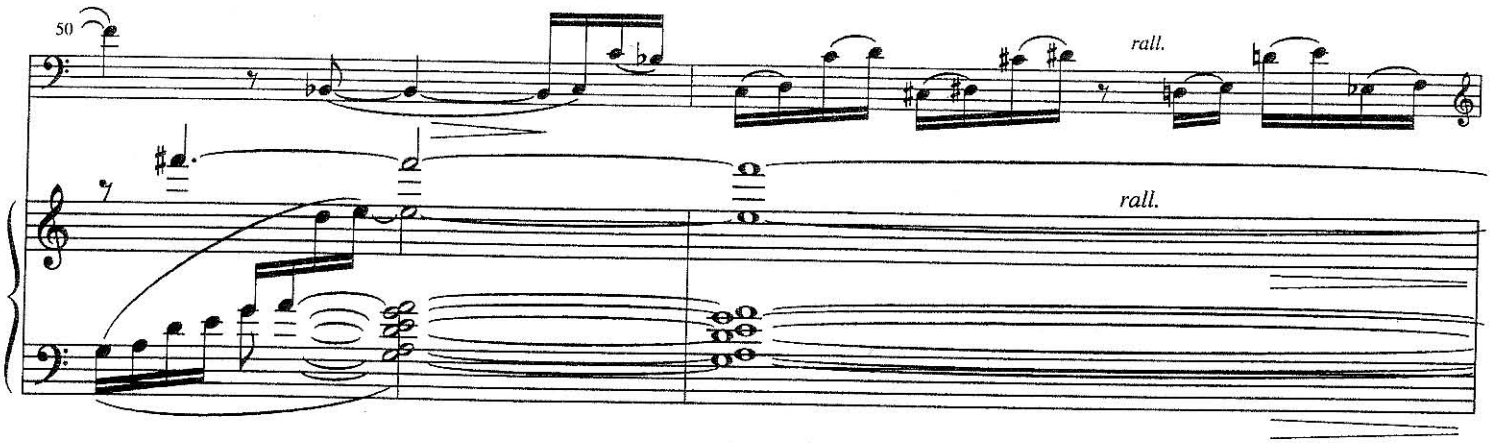
♩ = 60

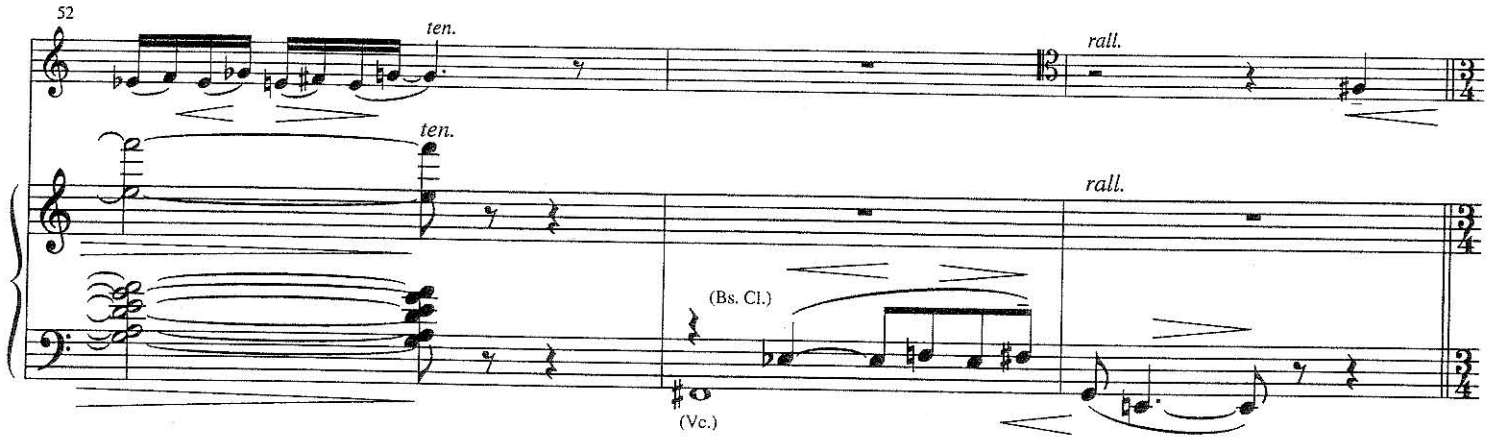
esp.

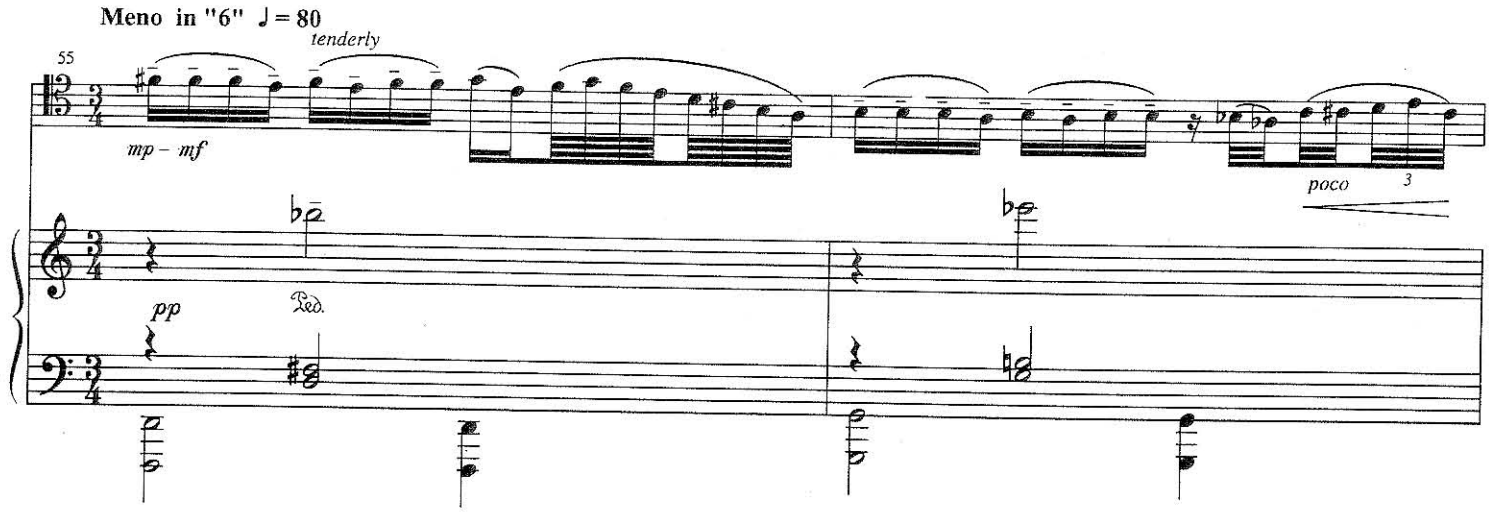
mf

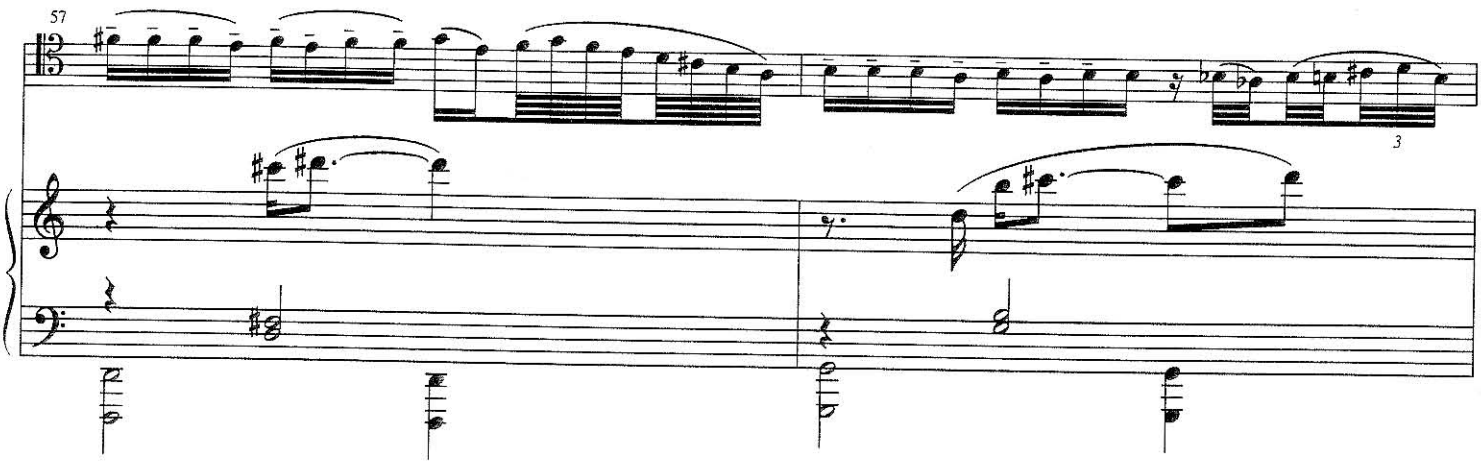
pp Ped.

39
sfz
Dramatico
42
sfz
ff
45
Move a Little
mf
mf
Ped.
pp
48


50
rall.
rall.


52
ten.
ten.
rall.
rall.
(Bs. Cl.)
(Vc.)


Meno in "6" ♩= 80
55
tenderly
mp – mf
poco
3
pp
Ped.


57
3

59
61
Flt. Solo
63
Flt. Solo
Solo
mf
65
mf
8va

67
bring out
Solo
loco
ossia
fff
69
mosso
cresc. molto
3
fff
f
71
Un Poco Piu Mosso
(Orch.)
mf
f
Ped.
74
3

77
Ped.
cresc.
80
ff
82
rall. e cresc. poss.
ten.
ff Quasi Cad.
rall. e cresc. poss.
sfz
84
poco accel. e rit.
Serenely-Moving along ♩ = 60
mf
legatiss.
poco accel. e rit.
p

86
89
pp
91
poco rubato
L.H.
93
rit.
Quasi Cad.
rit.
ppp
L.H.

95
accel.
rit.
rit.
accel.
98
Reflectively
pp
pp
Ped.
Ped.
3
101
niente
p
poco
104
rall. e dim. poss.
lunga
rall. e dim. poss.
lunga
ppp
let all ring
Keep Ped. Down
– R.H.
L.H.
Ped.

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(for Judith Le Clair)

SOLO BASSOON

JOHN WILLIAMS

I. Eó Mugna

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31
mf
3
p
Solo
34
mf
7
36
7
7
4
42
8
3
Solo
ff
Quasi Cadenza
54
57
sfz sub.
rapide
mp
59
Un poco meno
mf
3
62
64
sfz
5
67
sfz
3
70
dim.
a niente

II. Tortan

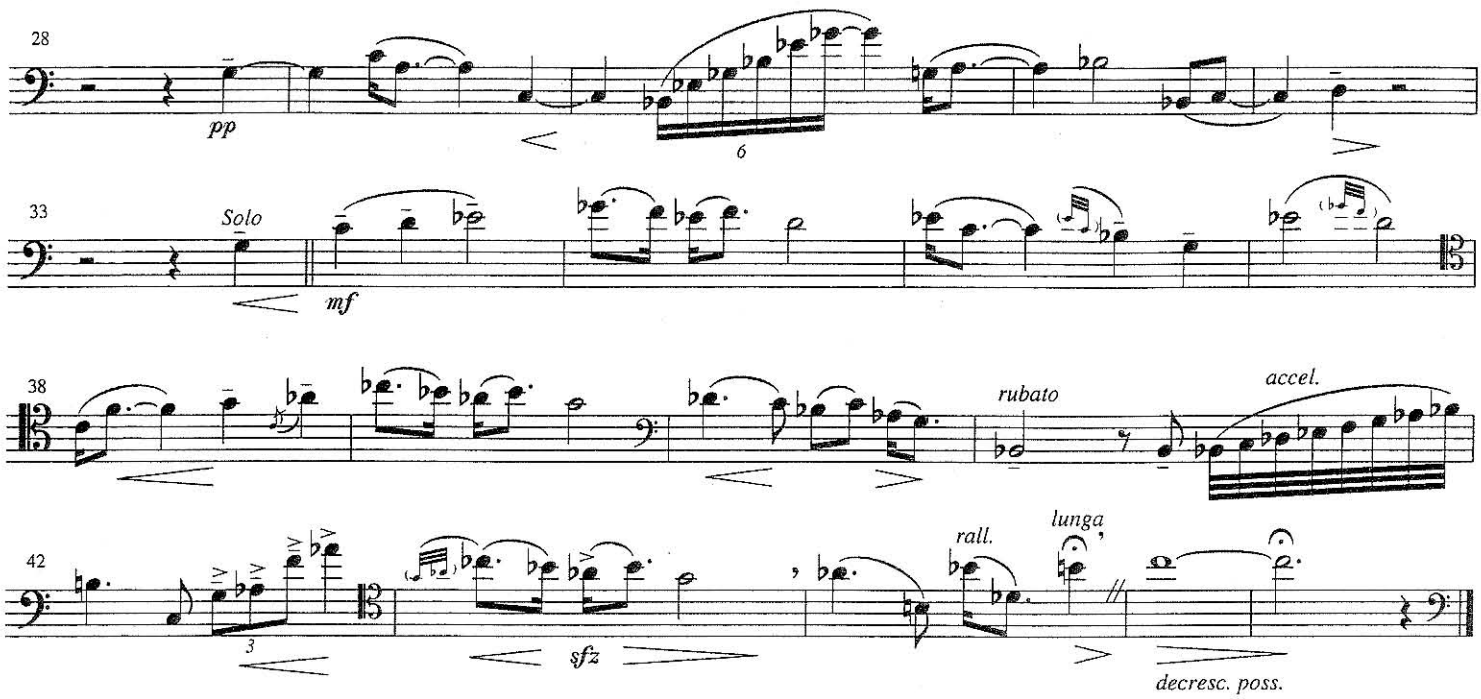
Energico ♩ = 76-80
9
Solo
p
13
sfz
p
cresc.
16
f
p sub.
ff
19
f
p
22
27
mf
30
p
33
sfz
p
sfz
37
mf
opt. 8va
41
f
45
f
cresc.

Cantabile
50
2
mf
56
ten.
61
3
65
sfz
f
71
76
81
11
8
Solo
mf
sfz
102
sfz
sfz
p
sfz
sfz
sfz
106
p
cresc.
sfz
109
sub. ff
6
6
mp
113
sfz
cresc.
sfz

118
ff
121
ff
125
4
Solo
f
131
fff
Solo
sub. p
133
sub. fff

III. Eó Rossa

Slowly ♩ = 60-66
3
Solo
pp
Reflectively ♩ = 58
mf
pp
13 Mosso
16
19
23 sotto voce
rit.
2



IV. Craeb Uisnig

Quietly, but with great intensity ♩ = 88 (♪ = 176)

26
f
sfz
cresc.
30
ff
sfz
sffz
33
sfz
mf
37
sfz
41
fp
sfz
45
cresc. poss.
52
8
60
a little more deliberate
Solo
mp
sfz
63
sfz
sfz
66
sfz
sfz
69
sfz

72
sub. mp
cresc.
75
sfz
79
sfz
83
with great force
ff
sffz
87
sffz
4
97
Solo
f
3
103
ff
marc.
4:3
108
f
112
sffz
117
marc.
3
122
5
attacca

V. Dathi

Slowly and Reflectively
8
4
rall. e dim.
2
Calmo
15
♩ = 60
esp.
34
molto rall. e dim.
mf
39
sfz
42
Dramatico
Move a Little
sfz
ff
mf
46
mf
49
rall.
52
ten.
rall.
Meno in "6" ♩ = 80
tenderly
55
mp - mf
poco
57
59
61
(Flute Solo)
2

65
mf
bring out
68
Solo
mosso
ossia
fff
70
cresc. molto
Un Poco Piu Mosso
fff
73
82
rall.
Rubato
ten.
ff Quasi Cad.
poco accel. e rit.
Serenely - Moving along ♩ = 60
85
mf
89
poco rubato
93
rit.
Quasi Cad.
95
rit.
accel.
Reflectively
98
pp
niente
102
poco
p
rall. e dim. poss.
lunga